

ARVIN-EDISON WATER STORAGE DISTRICT

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DATE:

9/23/99

TO:

Lester Snow

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COMPANY:

CALFED Bay-Delta

FROM:

Steve Collier

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ARVIN-EDISON WATER STORAGE DISTRICT

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September 23, 1999

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FILE NO.

Mr. Lester Snow
Executive Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 9th Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Comments on Revised Draft Programmatic Environmental
Impact Statement/Report for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program**

Dear Mr. Snow:

We submit the following comments on the above-referenced Draft EIS/R. These comments are in addition to Friant Water Users Authority's comments on behalf of this District made at the Visalia hearing held on September 14, 1999. Additionally, we have reviewed, endorse, and incorporate herein by reference the more comprehensive and technical comments submitted by the Ag/Urban Group and the Kern County Water Agency. The comments that follow are only a summary and the more specific and technical comments we have referenced, which can be referred to for further detail as needed.

By way of introduction, Arvin-Edison Water Storage District (District) consists of 130,000 acres of highly productive agricultural lands growing a great variety of crops, which are exported throughout the world. (We also provide small amounts of M & I service within our District.) The gross farm production from our District, which when multiplied several fold for the "multiplier effect," provides significant contribution to the economy of this region and the State as a whole, along with thousands of jobs to residents of the State. We hold a Federal water contract for water from the Friant-Kern System of the Central Valley Project (CVP) but have also exchanged water supplies with eight other Districts, who hold contracts for water through the Delta, for the last 25 years. These long-term exchanges have added greatly to the reliability of our supplies and have facilitated more efficient water management for Arvin-Edison and all its exchangors. The District also holds a Federal contract for power from the CVP.

Our comments on the Revised Draft EIS/R are as follows:

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A. ESOSYSTEM QUALITY:

1. In analyzing the proposed Environmental Water Account (EWA), CALFED improperly assumes a baseline for EWA providing additional environmental benefits to that already provided by the Bay-Delta Accord, plus CVPIA, plus existing ESA Biological Opinions. This is entirely inappropriate and inconsistent with the Accord, which was recognized as an interim measure until a long-term CALFED solution was prepared.
2. The EWA must assume full risk for its actions, and water use for environmental purposes must be accounted for the same as for agricultural or urban purposes.
3. The proposition of a Delta System diversion fee is entirely inappropriate to the extent that water users achieve no benefits from CALFED programs. Additionally, no mention is made of the Federal government paying a fee for environmental water diverted under existing regulations, such as the ESA. The diversion fees or other user based financing can only be considered to the extent it is linked to tangible benefits received from the Program in terms of an enhanced water supply.
4. Funding for board-based public benefits must also include costs incurred by the SWP and CVP for reoperating those projects.
5. The Draft EIS/R suggests that ecosystem restoration programs could require up to 700,000 acre-feet of water over the baseline, which would have a significant impact on agricultural resources, which is not adequately evaluated, not to mention in violation of guiding principles under which CALFED was formed.

B. WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY:

1. The potential benefits of Water Use Efficiency (WUE) are grossly overestimated.
2. WUE will not reduce demand for Delta exports.
3. The stated prerequisite for demonstrated WUE to any new storage is inappropriate.
4. There is ample information for a programmatic finding that additional storage is needed.
5. Export water quality and diversion effects on fishery can be enhanced by a dual delivery system, which is not adequately considered.
6. The suggested limitation on transfers absent WUE measures would interfere with water marketing and inappropriately assumes that water transfers are a new source of water.

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C. COMPREHENSIVE MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND RESEARCH PROGRAM ("CMARP"):

1. The Draft EIS/R fails to provide any details on institutional structure for CMARP and how it would be funded.
2. It is totally inappropriate and counter-productive for agricultural research to be based simply on reducing water requirements – the crop mix in California is entirely market driven.

D. IMPACTS TO CVP POWER

1. The Draft EIS/R shows rate increases up to and above market rates, and does not discuss the consequences of these rate increases on Western's customers. CALFED has not been forthcoming with a commitment to mitigation for rate impacts.
2. The Draft EIS/R ignores completely the potential adverse impact on the repayment of CVP project capital debt resulting from higher rates and reductions in energy generation.
3. Power customers may realize a magnified impact on rate increases as Restoration Fund charges also increase to cover additional ecosystem restoration projects. Should the total cost of CVP Power increase significantly and customers purchase power from other sources, ecosystem restoration funding may be adversely impacted as customers look elsewhere for energy.
4. Also, to the extent power customers shift from hydropower to fossil fuel generation sources, negative air-quality impacts are likely to result. This may produce another redirected impact.
5. The policies of "no redirected impacts" and "beneficiary pays" are inadequately considered in the Draft EIS/R.
6. The Final EIS/R should contain the additional analysis necessary to address these issues comprehensively.
7. As far as CVP Power is concerned, we suspect the consequences of the Preferred Alternative will result in a loss of hydropower resources, a significant negative economic impact to CVP Power customers, an adverse impact to ecosystem restoration funding, and an impairment of the Federal government's ability to repay project debt.

E. GENERAL:

1. The Draft EIS/R assumes that any increase in water supply will be growth inducing. This is clearly an error as growth has occurred in California and will continue to occur while its water supplies have been decreasing, not increasing. The State's water supply must be increased and keep up with growth, unless CALFED intends to control immigration or birth rates.

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2. The Draft EIS/R is a great disappointment to all of us who "went out on a limb" to support the Accord and the formation of CALFED in an effort to "get better together." The Draft EIS/R must be fundamentally rewritten and redirected if there is any opportunity for this process to succeed.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve C. Collup" followed by a flourish.

Steve C. Collup
Engineer-Manager

cc: Howard Frick
Ernest Conant, Esq.



September 23, 1999

Mr. Lester Snow
CALFED Bay Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

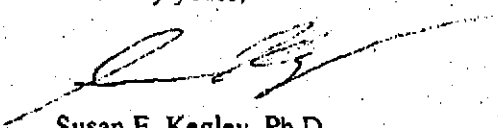
Dear Mr. Snow,

I am writing to comment on the CALFED plan for reduction of pesticide runoff into surface waters. Although we do not know every detail of the ecological damage caused by pesticides in surface waters, there is irrefutable evidence that aquatic life is suffering serious harm from these chemicals. I have done an extensive review of the literature on this topic, the results of which are included in the enclosed report, *Disrupting the Balance: Ecological Impacts of Pesticides in California*. I encourage you to read Chapter 3, *Effects of Pesticides on Aquatic Plants and Animals*, where the specifics are discussed. I have two major concerns with the CALFED plan as written.

There are few actions detailed in the plan that would actually reduce discharges of pesticides to surface waters. In particular, there is a glaring omission from the proposed strategies for dealing with pesticide runoff. Most of the attention is given to keeping pesticides on the farms where they are applied, when *reducing total pesticide use* is the strategy that is guaranteed to be successful in decreasing runoff to surface waters—reducing pesticide use should be the primary goal. For this to be a successful approach, support and incentives must be provided to growers to switch from their chemical dependency to more sustainable methods of farming. As many California farmers already know, least-toxic pest management does work. The CALFED plan should pay more than lip service to sustainable agriculture practices, giving these approaches priority for funding and action. Reducing chemical inputs should be the central “best management practice.”

Past experience has shown that relying on voluntary action of growers will result in no change to management practices. Change will only take place if pesticide runoff into surface waters is regulated and violators of the regulations are fined. The Rice Herbicide Program that was set up by the Department of Pesticide Regulation in 1984 is a reasonably successful example of how regulatory action resulted in a dramatic decrease in agricultural pesticide runoff into surface waters (see page 61 in the attached report). Voluntary action from growers was requested first, to no avail. It is time to learn from past experience. Regulatory action will be necessary to change grower habits.

Sincerely yours,


Susan E. Kegley, Ph.D.
Staff Scientist/Program Coordinator

Steering Committee

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Canadian Association
of Physicians for the
Environment

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